

Management Models of Symphonic Orchestras in the Czech Republic and their Development in the 21st century

Lucie Šilerová

Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, Czech Republic

ABSTRACT

The European trend is manifest in everyday situations of classical music. Orchestras face reduction of subsidies. They are forced to merge, change status, or both. Their numbers are heavily declining. These trends are observed all over Europe. The aim of the project was to get deeper insight into the situation in Bohemia, identification of weak-points and finding basic guidelines, according to theoretical and practical experiences of similar European/US institutions.

Methods involved case-studies, controlled interviews, principles of qualitative research. Historical context and comparison were also important.

Findings: There is high reluctance to change (relationship of musicians vs. administration, lack of “manager attitude”, absence of strategic planning). There is a low level of networking and sharing of administrative experiences.

Practical output of the research was implementation of innovative steps to increase financial self-sufficiency in selected orchestras. New organizational structures, systematic long-life education and training of staff were implemented, more students were involved in work-practices and cooperation with universities was strengthened.

Keywords:

Symphonic
orchestras

Symphonic music

Music making
process

Inner
organizational
processes

1. Introduction

Orchestral entities and symphonic music belong to the Czech national tradition – especially in the 19th century, symphonic music had a key role in national culture reformation. Great composers and their work is even today part of every orchestra's repertoire. The sufficiency of famous symphonic compositions (Dvořák: Slavonic Dances, Smetana: My country, Janáček: Taras Bulba or Martinů's Symphonies) created excellent conditions for interpretation and development of symphonic orchestras. The word "tradition" belongs to the crucial argumentation and formulation of strengths of Czech culture; a strong point of Czech culture is "a wealth of creative and interpretative works in the area of classical music" [MCCR, 2006].

The Czech Republic has some 200 theatres in the cultural network [Dostál, 2004] the conditions with orchestras are quite similar; two large categories of symphonic orchestra entities can be recognized – professional and non-professional orchestras. In the area of professional music there are about 22 orchestral entities and 18 other casual orchestras [Dohnalová, 2005]. Also there are 95 non-professional chamber orchestras, 18 non-professional classical symphony orchestras, most of them based in Prague, Central Bohemia and South Moravia [Lázňovská, 2005]. One has to understand the needs of the organization, dramaturgy and repertoire in historical relations of former parts of the Habsburg Empire - Bohemia and Moravia, today's Czech Republic. Briefly, focus will be on the most important links to get a view of the world of Czech orchestras.

Development of first symphonic orchestras is connected with the golden era of classical music at the end of the 18th and 19th century. From that time on we can still find symphonies written by Ludwig van Beethoven in the core repertoire, with minor changes in the instrumental rules. He bridged over the Classical and Romantic period and inspired music composers after him – the romantic era of 19th century and music of the 20th century; they followed and developed new strategies to match the local situation and circumstances. At the same time orchestras as we know them today were founded – financed by public sources (eg. the German city of Aachen founded its city orchestra in 1852) [Jacobshagen, 2006].

The contemporary form of symphonic orchestras has been established partially with the work of composers of the classical period. But even before them court music ensembles were present which played a crucial role in the process of development. The Central European area is still full of fine renaissance and baroque castles, where aristocratic society kept and maintained groups of musicians usually with a hired composer / chapel-master and vocalists. The reason was the pleasure of music and the wealth and social status to that could be shown among the nobility.

For the very first time in the middle of the 16th century, court bands were established in the Bohemian area (Prague with its imperial music group – Císařská kapela, South Bohemian groups in Třeboň and Rožmberk and the Moravian group in Olomouc) [Vaculová, 2006].

After The Thirty Years' War in the second half of the 17th century, there was an enormous increase in similar music groups. Comparatively small cities became centers of culture and music. Above the others, Kroměříž (with well known composers Biber and Vejvanovský) and Jaroměřice nad Rokytnou (with its unique ensemble made up of local talented people) [ibid]. Whereas the importance of local courts declined during the 18th century, the role of music groups shifted due to the new social rules and the gradual creation of national Czech music. These two factors influenced further development in orchestral ensembles as known in these days.

At the end of the 18th century, the society experienced some fundamental changes, not least in the attitudes to hygiene and healthcare. West Bohemian spa regions became world famous because of their thermal and mineral springs, which attracted thousands of rising middle class people as well as the nobility and important persons of political and cultural life [SLL, 2009].

Ideas of clean body and soul were interlinked with relaxation and needs for cultural development. Nature and culture were in close connection, which was highly preferred in the time of emerging industries and growing tensions in the urbanized areas.

The most important spa regions were in the western Bohemia – Františkovy Lázně (Franzesbad), Mariánské lázně (Marienbad), Karlovy Vary (Karlsbad) and Teplice (Teplitz-Schönau). These cities quickly became international, cultural and intellectual meeting places. Spas were often visited by famous people – J. W. Goethe, L. van Beethoven, but also by the nobility - Russian Tsar Peter and various European state rulers. Well known artists have visited them frequently. These people were primarily seeking medical treatment, but the cultural life was also essential [Sdružení lázeňských míst, 2012].

The first orchestra in Mariánské lázně was established in 1821 [Orchestra History, 2012] - only three years after the city gained the status of "Spa-City" (lázeňské město). Closely following were orchestras in Karlovy Vary – 1835 [Dohnalová, 2005] and in Teplice – 1838 [Příbylová, Dietz, 2008] (Figure 1).

The main purpose of the orchestras was to perform during the summer days on the colonnade – a roofed walking area where guests could drink a cup of mineral water or undergo spa procedures in nearby houses. Also, orchestras produced numerous concerts during the season in the local theaters, spa houses and cultural halls. The quality is presumed to be high compared to the standards of that time. Regular Marienbad guests, among others, were famous musicians such as Frederic Chopin and Richard

Czech Spa Triangle and Teplice

Czech Republic



FIGURE 1. THE CZECH SPA TRIANGLE (THE REGION OF HOT SPRINGS) WHERE THE FIRST CZECH ORCHESTRAS APPEARED.

Wagner. At those times, about 20,000 visitors (mostly wealthy) came every year.

There were also interesting developments in Karlovy Vary spa. Among the top performances was the European premiere of Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No. 9 in E Minor "From the New World" [Dohnalová, 2005].

Also, the Teplice orchestra rendered regular cycles of symphonic music under the interpretation of the most famous conductors and soloists at the end of the 19th century. The most important personalities of the world music scene gave concerts in Teplice, like conductors Eugen d'Albert and Richard Strauss; pianists Ferruccio Busoni, Conrad Ansoerge, Emil Sauer, Ernö Dohnányi and Frederic Lamond; violinists Pablo de Sarasate, Eugene Ysaye, Bronislav Huberman, Fritz Kreisler, Alexander Pecnikov and Henri Marteau; cellists David Popper, Julius Klengel, Hugo Becker and Anton Hekking; singers Lili Lehmann, Ernestine Heineke-Schumann and many others. During the summer, the orchestra performed in 150 colonnade and 18 symphonic concerts and in winter, cycles of symphonic concerts [Příbylová, Dietz, 2008].

The orchestra in its current form appeared later (i.e. institutions providing public services available to the broad masses of the population). Orchestral development is associated with the development of

classical music in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and is also associated with the achievements of the famous composers Mahler, Strauss and Wagner, whose works could not be presented any more by amateur orchestras. Their huge compositions needed a high level of professionalism from the musicians. The development of the musical language and dramaturgy of the orchestra were closely connected.

The formation of the Czech Philharmonic was an unprecedented and long awaited step in Czech culture. The empire capital Vienna had maintained a royal orchestra for a long time, and Prague couldn't produce anything comparable. Local musicians and composers were eager to have a national body that would represent the Bohemian personality and cultural independence. This could not be realized by the spa orchestras due to their regionalism – they were in an area of Bohemia inhabited mainly by a German speaking audience, both folk and nobility. In contrast to other similar organizations in Europe or the USA, the orchestral growth in Bohemia was not generously supported by wealthy entrepreneurs, or by the Royal Court. In Prague, the orchestra was partially formed by opera musicians themselves and partially by influential composers such as Bedřich Smetana and Antonín Dvořák. The establishment of the orchestra occurred as a result of the motivation of musicians.

The orchestra's first years were highly

Historical Development of orchestral ensembles in the Czech Republic	
List of key orchestras	Year
Mariánské lázně Orchestra (today West Bohemian Symphony Orchestra of Mariánské Lázně)	1821
Karlovy Vary Orchestra (today Karlovy Vary Symphony Orchestra)	1835
Teplice Orchestra (today North Czech Philharmonic)	1838
Czech Philharmonic	1896
The Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra	1926
Prague Symphony Orchestra FOK (film, opera, concerts)	1934
FISYO (originally Barrandov film studios orchestra)	1943
Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra	1945
Symphony Orchestra of the Baťa Concern (today Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra)	1946
Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra	1946
Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra Ostrava (originally a radio orchestra)	1954
Brno Radio Orchestra (today Brno Philharmonic)	1956
Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice	1969
Philharmonic Orchestra Hradec Králové	1977
Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra of South Bohemia	1981

TABLE 1. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF ORCHESTRAL BODIES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC, LIST OF KEY ORCHESTRAS

complicated due to the lack of funds and also lack of state support. The first official concert was held on 4 January 1896 when Antonín Dvořák conducted his own compositions. The orchestra was running on low budget until the new Czechoslovakia was formed in 1918, after that many world famous conductors worked there in the following years [Zapletal, 2009].

Essential for the next development of symphonic orchestras was technical progress – music for radio and cinema. The first official national radio broadcasting took place in 1923. It was connected with the new need for live music broadcast on the first radio station in Czechoslovakia - Radiojournal. [Dohnalová, 2005]. It was three years after the first broadcasting when The Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra (1926) was established. The world famous movie studio Barrandov also provided an opportunity to establish another new orchestra in 1936. World War II and the advent of the communist regime had a fundamental impact on the evolution of these bodies. Communism was interested in an art available to common people and the concept of public service was described as the main mission of public art organizations.

The foundation of regional orchestras took place after 1950 when regional radio stations were also often broadcasting music on the air. Culture was supported as food for the masses and flourished in

industrial areas where it resulted in new orchestras - Brno Philharmonic (1956) and Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava (1954).

Many aspects of everyday life were different during socialism, but not all were detrimental to the music culture. While television was still in development, a wide orchestral network was established and became renowned. Due to the political circumstances, the repertoire remained unchanged for many years – classical music was not dangerous for the regime. As a result there was little change or development inside the orchestras during this period. Dohnalová (2005, p. 6) explicitly states: “Socialist Czechoslovakia had a policy of developing and maintaining the network of so-called “state orchestras” in such a way that every region would have at least one professional philharmonic. This cultural network, financed by the state, operated for the whole period of the socialist regime up to 1989.”

After 1989 state ownership was over and the orchestras had to find new ways to continue their existence. This opportunity was often taken up by municipalities, but also Český rozhlas (the Czech radio) is still the owner of one of the orchestras. The orchestras have mostly been transformed into municipally subsidized organizations. Also some nonprofit and commercial organizations have emerged, but they are unable up to this point to form

an equal counterpart to the existing orchestras in terms of benefits for musicians.

The fifteen orchestras remaining today are gathered into The Association of Symphony Orchestras and Choirs of the Czech Republic – ASOPS. Nine of them are listed as municipality subsidized organizations, four were transformed into non-profit public organizations (o. p. s.), one is a vocal choir. The Czech radio orchestra has its own special status granted by law. Many private orchestras have been founded since 1990, but only a few of them are fully financially self-supporting.

Analysis of the situation in the 21st century in Czech Republic

The development of orchestral ensembles influenced an important study of Baumol and Bowen (1966). "Whereas the amount of labor necessary to produce a typical manufactured product has constantly declined since the beginning of the industrial revolution, it requires about as many minutes for Richard II to tell his "sad stories of the death of kings" as it did on the stage of the Globe Theatre. Human ingenuity has devised ways to reduce the labor necessary to produce an automobile, but no one has yet succeeded in decreasing the human effort expended at a live performance of a 45-minute Schubert quartet much below a total of three man-hours." Flanagan (2012) further explains: "The relevance of the cost disease to the performing arts is readily apparent. Activities in which the relationship between labor inputs and outputs cannot be extensively altered by technical changes have the highest potential for cost disease. Symphony orchestras and other performing arts provide prime examples. Composers of classical music and the authors of plays largely determine the number of musicians or actors required for their works, and that number rarely changes over time."

The long-term European trend for orchestras is manifested in everyday situations and activities. They face a serious reduction of financial subsidies primarily used for everyday operations. Sometimes the situation is solved by merging the orchestras or by changing their status, or a combination of both. The results are obvious. The number of orchestras is declining heavily, e.g. in Germany (after unification) they have been reduced by 40 since 1989 [Jacobshagen, 2006]. Similar trends can be observed in the Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Poland, Great Britain and France [Rauhe, 1997].

Another negative factor is the increasing number of possible activities in the free time of the general public [Rosen, 2012].

The factor of economical influence is getting more importance over the cultural factors as described by Albert and Whetten (1985): In the symphony orchestra, for instance, musicians enact the normative identity and administrators (managers and board members) enact the utilitarian identity, which is "governed by values of economic rationality, the maximization of profit, and the minimization of cost".

This situation is further described by Ann Glynn, where she is looking for the cause of tension between administrators and performers in orchestras in a multi-professional environment within these ensembles. The concept is based on the American experience, but it can be related to the Central European (CE) context. In the CE geographical area the decision process is not determined by the board of directors, but rather by the municipality and management of the orchestra. They usually work with public funds.

Glynn states (2000): The multifaceted, complex nature of the symphony's identity is further elaborated in, and reinforced by, the existence of different professional groups within the orchestra. Musicians have a professional identity as performance artists and union members (The American Federation of Musicians, AFM); orchestra executives are somewhat under professionalized, lacking certification (but seeking it), and trying to combine both business skills and artistic training, since many are former musicians. For board members, the symphony board is largely a secondary affiliate, following after their primary occupation (e. g., law, business, medicine).

Another important argument mentioned by Rauhe is the fact that the orchestras function like museums - maintaining and reviving old masterpieces (eg. just as no one would ever destroy the Mona Lisa, so we need orchestras to keep our musical treasures alive). Seeing a living performance is the most valuable experience of all. There is also need for orchestral ensembles because of debuts and premieres of new compositions.

The situation in the Czech Republic is not adequately monitored and tracked. The factual situation is being only partially disclosed and considered by many orchestral directors to be a special proprietary "know how", which makes the overview of the area more complicated. Despite the obstacles, some of the subsidized organizations or public entities have converted to civil associations or

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non-profit organizations. It is said that this process helps to make up for the stagnating or decreased funding from the original founders. In some regions growing political pressure has been observed. It is possible in the future that symphonic orchestras will need to fuse with opera orchestras as result of some political determination. But culture is still considered to be an important part of life, despite the tough economic conditions and the focus on preventing increasing public subsidies to the budgets of symphonic ensembles. Culture remains a vital part of social programs. [MCCR, 2006].

The current economic situation does not allow for full scale public financing of orchestras. Financial mechanisms have to be changed, especially for cultural organizations with huge buildings which need continuous investments. Also management of human resources inside the orchestras is not efficient and an update of marketing, promotional and personnel processes is essential. The contemporary demand of audiences for quality has to be met at the same time as financial sustainability and effective competition for limited leisure time activities.

Insights about the legal environment in the Czech Republic

It is essential to mention the fundamental legal concepts that affect the very existence of the orchestral ensembles researched for this paper. Most of the orchestral ensembles function as organizations subsidized by municipalities (also called “contributory organizations” or “subsidiary organizations” or “subscription organizations” [Dohnalová, 2005]).

In the Czech Republic the legal status of the state and municipally funded organizations is regulated and they are fully dependent on budgetary rules and state laws concerning the regional budgetary regulations. These organizations require a separate legal entity to be established for activities in

their jurisdiction - usually a non-profit one. The founder (zřizovatel) has to issue the founding document for its organization. The founder also is entitled to appoint or dismiss the director, decide on the remunerations, investigate complaints against the ensemble and even to check the economic performance of the contributing organization. [Telec, 1998].

In the Czech Republic it is recognized that the founders could be the Ministry of Culture, a city municipality or a regional government. The Czech Philharmonic has been established directly by the Ministry of Culture; most other regional orchestras are operated by municipalities.

One important benefit sought for by professional Czech orchestras is to obtain financial support from the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry offers regular grant programs for professional orchestras called “The state support of professional theatres and permanent professional symphonic orchestras and choirs”. The organizations have to meet certain criteria to be allowed to participate in them.

These programs are designed for the benefit of subsidized organizations, nongovernmental organizations, other entities or individuals, and permanent professional symphonic orchestras that have to meet the following obligations:

- Size – a minimum number of 35 employed musicians
- Professionalism - at least 75% of the musicians to be included in the main employment contract, or similar legal relationship
- Brass and wind sections - at least 12 players on wind and brass instruments as permanent employees of the orchestra.

Other criteria required for enrollment in the program of subsidies are:

1. Self-sufficiency in 2010 of at least:

- 13% self-sufficiency for subsidized organizations with a total of more than 150 employees (eg. a theatre in which there are at least 80 artists),
- 15% self-sufficiency for subsidized organizations, charitable organizations, civic associations, with a minimum number of 20 employees (theatre, orchestra – with not less than 10 artists, symphony orchestras, choirs),
- 80%: self-sufficiency for other ensembles established under commercial law (Private theatre, symphony orchestras, choirs).

2. Minimum number of performances or concerts in 2010:

- 130 performances by the applicant (opera and dance / ballet 50),
- 60 orchestral concerts (the promenade concerts in spas are counted as 1/2),
- 50 choral concerts.

3. Financing by other bodies has to be insured and documented.

4. Permanent artistic work has to be proven for at least 3 consecutive years.

Orchestral representatives use the criteria generally as an expression of the specific position and definition of the orchestras, unlike music agencies, which hire musicians only for individual concerts or projects.

There are many further differences between subsidized orchestras and other (private) ensembles. Some of them need to be understood in a wider context, since the subsidized organizations have to employ a number of musicians and provide them with musical instruments. Also the organization is to take care of the regular replacement and maintenance of the instruments. Musicians get benefits such as support for concert clothing. Musicians also have an employment contract, not only for individual events, but for the whole year or an indefinite time period (not seasonal).

The Ministry of Culture allocates a sum of less than 100 million CZK each year to the program. Given the fact that the program applies to theatres, choirs and orchestras, the average support amount for orchestras outside of Prague is about 5 million CZK. Compared to the amount of employees in these organizations, the contribution of the Ministry becomes a nearly marginal part in their budgets.

In some of the examined bodies (Ostrava, Karlovy Vary) the calculation of the coefficient of self-sufficiency is closely linked to this of kind support. The coefficient is being calculated from the total gross sales and revenues which create a huge financial difference for orchestras performing in their own buildings and/or at rented premises.

Public cultural service is not yet defined in the Czech law system. The definition of this concept is important for orchestral ensembles. The Ministry of Culture published a study entitled: "The status of conceptual material culture in regions of the Czech Republic" [MCCR, 2012] in which the term is defined as follows:

Public cultural services are services consisting of:

- the making of cultural goods, open to the public (i.e., protection, processing, interpretation, presentation and animation in the form of the results of artistic and cultural heritage)
- the acquisition, processing, protection, preservation and accessibility of media serving to satisfy the cultural needs of the public, (i.e., distribution, rental and lending)
- arranging opportunities for improvement and expansion of cultural competence in the public through active participation in creative cultural activities.

Common properties of public cultural services are to meet the following obligations:

- universality (i.e. available to all members of the public)
- continuity (consistently provided)
- quality (professional and responsible collection and mediation of cultural property with a view to presenting their authentic inner quality and addressing genuine needs of the differentiated public)
- economic availability (sometimes in combination with availability of spatial and social facilities)
- plurality of contents (in justified cases; may be disregarded).

The scope of public cultural services is set down by public authorities and governments funding these services. The main obligation of the public service is to "provide" the culture to the public "free of charge" or for adequate compensation. Clear legal and economic status of public institutions providing direct cultural services is essential.

2. Subject of the research, process and research methods used

The initial task was to map the current situation of professional orchestral ensembles in the Czech Republic. There were many press references about their transformations or aims of merging.

Most often the subsidized organization changed into a form of nongovernmental non-commercial

organization - an "obecně prospěšná společnost" (general beneficial company¹). These created the basic aims and questions for the research.

Basic aims and research questions:

- Size – a minimum number of 35 employed musicians
- To describe the current situation and the historical context for orchestral ensembles. To specify their position of in/dependence.
- Why there is a reduction of orchestral budgets and which types?
- Under which form of legal entity are the key Czech orchestras established?
- Which are the main public interests in and requirements for the Czech orchestras? Are they specialized?
- Can professional symphony orchestras be financially self-sufficient?

Other main points:

- Possibilities of organizational structure of the orchestral elements – using the "advantages" of the financial crisis by merging elements. Are there some foreign institutions using the unique operation principles that could be instituted in the Czech Republic?
- Analyses of suitable organizational structures for Czech orchestras in difficult economic conditions.
- International trends in the quantitative development of orchestras
- Examine the widening gap between the number of music graduates and their use as orchestral players or at the orchestra management level.

The general objectives of the work

The objectives and results of the work are focused on the situation in the Czech context of 21st century. The work is aimed at finding answers to many questions, but still more it desires to establish a platform, which might give further insight in this very complicated situation.

The research targets how context and critical milestones must be taken into account.

The research methods

Case studies: we conducted several case studies using appropriate tools, such as controlled interviews with professionals in leading positions, and carried out basic financial analyses and analyses of official documents representing the organizational structure. All the methods used fit in the frame of qualitative research principles [Švaříček, 2007].

The initial research relied on freely available materials. Information from the websites of orchestras, search terms, research codes, freely available documents of orchestras were all important. A crucial role was played by checklists for semi-structured interviews, based on a set of research questions and findings from the basic information. The next step was the gradual selection of the respondents. All interviews were conducted on the basis of personal meetings, often repeated. The individual interviews were carried out by gradually asking questions, but leaving space to the respondents. Interviews were conducted with both the senior-level executives of orchestras (e.g. director, deputy inspector orchestra, head of marketing department) and the artistic staff (concert master, conductor). Also very useful were interviews with officials and other researchers (e. g. Arts Institute Prague).

The research involved the Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava, Karlovy Vary Symphony orchestra, North Czech Philharmonic Teplice, West-Bohemian Symphony Orchestra Marienbad and the opera orchestra of the Moravia Theatre in Olomouc. Also representatives of the Association of Orchestras and Choirs took part in the research, starting at first with the Brno Philharmonic Orchestra, Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc and the private Berg orchestra.

Among other questions the study dealt with the following matters: personnel politics, communication channels inside the organization, sources of financing, software support, staff training and focus on concerts from the viewpoint of the audience (non regular visitors versus prepaid subscribers).

The actual research was preceded by the study of publicly available secondary resources. To gain primary resources, a qualitative research was conducted with the use of a set of informal interviews in selected cultural organizations with an orchestra. The method used was face-to-face interviewing both individually and in a group of two respondents. For the questioning the techniques of direct and indirect questions were selected. The interviews were recorded by taking notes, as well as creation of an actual audio recording, where allowed. [Kozel, 2006] The respondents were selected according to their scope of responsibilities and knowledge of the

¹ Translated by the author.

organization among low and top-level management. Interview responses were kept anonymous.

Research of the historical context

It involves the research and studying of anterior documents provided by orchestral archives and libraries. Gradually a huge amount of specialized literature was examined, among others the very interesting and motivating documents of American Symphony Orchestra League (ASOL). Also papers were used that focus on modern general management, organizational structure, etc.

Evaluation and comparison

Theoretical knowledge of management principles provides for the development of organizations, optimization of the organizational structures (schemes), and improvement of communication processes. All this is combined with hands-on experience gathered during the years of working with orchestras. The author follows the fundamentals of qualitative research, collection of theoretical data and analysis provided by the ASOL. Americans had already succeeded in applying many of the principles in the world of orchestral arts but in the European context it is not possible to use all of them. Gradual implementation of new interviews proceeded with the emergence of new trends and discussion topics. Discussions also revealed some of the themes still unnamed and relevant.

3. Findings

Findings from the case study in the ASOPS (The Association of Symphony Orchestras and Choirs of the Czech Republic)

The purpose of this association is in "improving activities of member orchestras and choirs through meetings and communication of managing directors of these bodies" [ASOPS, 2010]. The association formally is the continuation of the former Association of Directors of Symphonic Orchestras of the Czech Republic (before 1989). As of today the Association incorporates the former state orchestras (with exceptions) to "enhance their authority in communication with the Ministry of Culture, municipalities and the labor union of Czech musicians (Odborový svaz orchestrálních hudebníků ČR). The Association was formed in 1996 and its members are required to meet some criteria when seeking membership. The member organizations should be professional in accordance with the employment of their musicians (the musician should have regular employment) and provide regular concert cycles for

subscription audiences. New members are welcomed after in-house polls.

Regular meetings are called twice a year. Directors come together for mutual exchange of experience as employers, sharing know how about the structures and needs of orchestras (by sharing various kind of documents). The Association is a member of the union of employers, which gives stronger position to the directors in disputes with the labor union of musicians. ASOPS also initiates meetings with a representative of the Ministry of Culture on a non-regular basis. Finally ASOPS formulates amendments to new political decisions.

During the year 2010/2011 the Association participated in a project financed with EU funds and entitled: "Increasing adaptability of worker organizations in the culture section".

This educational project funded by the European Social Fund under the Operational Program for Human Resources is intended to be used by members of labor unions. It is the Union of Employers (Unie zaměstnavatelů ČR) which serves as an umbrella organization of employers' associations from the industry, insurance, healthcare, education, culture and social services.

The project reflects the current development of the national economy, particularly in the field of culture. The project is aimed at an increase in the adaptability of cultural facilities.

The disadvantage of the project, as identified according to the research results and interviewed orchestral representatives, is that there is a very low chance for finding some money to send one person per orchestra off to some small educational meeting, when that person is usually the only one in the administrative force for the whole orchestral body. Also, the project can be used by institutions outside of Prague (owing to the exclusion of Prague from the support provided by some of the developing EU projects).

Educational activities are viewed very positively. Especially in the context of work processes, and the development of administrative jobs. Any commuting to a training seminar is not that easy. Educational activities take place directly at the seat of the orchestra but continuous education is provided for only two or three workers, at a maximum.

ASOPS should extend these activities using smaller pilot projects, which should be inspired by the activities of similar bodies abroad (e.g. ASOL). Expansion of the number of new ASOPS members is not in the interest of the organization. The Association acts as a guarantee of quality in the field of large symphonic ensembles and orchestras, and potentially in the tourist industry. The conductors communicate freely with each other today, but the directors could arrange also meetings for other types of employees, especially from the administrative staff. Meetings associated with certain educational activities may also be important when working with talented young conductors, or the constitution of new small work teams working on specified projects. On the other

Members of the Association	Type of entity	Comment
Bohuslav Martinů Philharmonic Orchestra	Public service company	
Brno Philharmonic	Subscription organization	
Hradec Králové Philharmonic Orchestra	Subscription organization	
Janáček Philharmonic Ostrava	Subscription organization	
Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra of South Bohemia	Subscription organization	
Karlovy Vary Symphony orchestra	Subscription organization	
Czech Chamber Philharmonic Orchestra Pardubice	Subscription organization	
Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra Olomouc	Subscription organization	
Pilsen Philharmonic Orchestra	Public service company	
Prague Philharmonia	Public service company	
North Czech Philharmonic Teplice	Subscription organization	
Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra	Czech Radio (by law)	
Prague Symphony Orchestra	Subscription organization	
West-Bohemian Symphony Orchestra Marienbad	Public service company	
Czech Philharmonic Choir of Brno	Public service company	Not an orchestra
Czech Philharmonic	Subscription organization	Not current member

TABLE 2. MEMBERS OF THE ASOPS AS OF SEPTEMBER 2011
[ASOPS, 2011]

hand, permanent employees are dependent on so called subscription cycles for regular audiences. A defined number of concerts is arranged over the course of the year, which ensures basic work for the musicians who can then be employed on a permanent, non-project basis. Reference to these cycles will be made later in the text.

Findings from case studies in the orchestras

One of the most important needs of Czech orchestras is independence for the institution, especially in the area of arts and culture. This is usually of very high importance for small, emerging organizations at the stage of planning the cultural direction, dramaturgy, or the program. Institutions intend to be original, by responding to the current problems of society. Czech government grant applications give new opportunities for their work; however access to the public funds comes through competition. The organization is required to meet specific conditions for the application. This requires a certain level of self-directing and losing some of the independence of the organization at the same time. Hardships are brought with short-term subsidies. They

are often granted on an unpredictable basis, which causes deep cuts in strategic planning and brings insignificant benefit from a small project. Typically, the duration of a small project extends over a period of one year, rarely two or three years. This fact requires the strong involvement of informal communication elements. Informal communication, although officially established, has the tendency to take recourse in personal contacts and relationships. This causes a quite confusing situation especially in the delegation of responsibilities.

Two separate lines in directing organizations were observed. The economical-technical line has different names from office to office. This line has strong involvement in operational and production segments, tends to have priority in marketing, public relations, concert tours, plan of season dramaturgy. The musician line tends to improve the personnel situation, interest in human resources and personal growth of the musicians. It generates pressure on the economy, through the trade unions, but also on a personal contact level, by appointing musicians into administrative positions.

Both lines are interdependent, but cannot operate separately. The head of the economic-technical line is usually the economic secretary (tajemník), the head of the musician line is the artistic

director or/and principal conductor (umělecký ředitel, dirigent). The director of the organization remains in charge of both lines.

There is a generally observed growing belief among orchestral members that the director should be a person educated in arts and music. At the same time, director has to encompass not only music organization, but also theory and management. The music director should not be "just" an artist, as was emphasized earlier [Pokora, 2011]. This belief results from the increasing pressures on the financial autonomy of the organizations; it brings no benefit to employ a director who does not possess the necessary skills in management, marketing, public relations, or economics. The director has usually some administrative apparatus at his/her own disposal, but these people cannot replace his/her crucial decisions and strategic planning. The regular nature of the

materials and is responsible for the artistic growth of the body.

Orchestral players numerically dominate other employees. Individual players are divided into two basic groups, group of strings and winds. Orchestras have different sets of leading instrumental groups. An important position is the koncertní mistr (concert master) - the first violinist, who usually participates in the artistic training of the orchestra and leads in some split rehearsals.

The orchestral supervisor (inspektor orchestru) is responsible for the attendance of the orchestra players. He regularly creates a rehearsal schedule (ferman) and coordinates technical staging. A few of the orchestra players are usually involved in the advisory art board (umělecká rada), consisting of 5 to 15 members. The number varies among the orchestras. The advisory art board holds regular

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concert schedule is an advantage compared to an opera orchestra. It extends usually over the period of one week. The whole concert setting is then generally repeated twice, after which players start to study a new piece of work.

The principal conductor is considered often as the musical leader of the ensemble. Other conductors are leased routinely for conducting of particular concerts, as well as specific guest and honorary conductors. Key administrative activities are performed in individual departments led by the Economic Secretary (ekonomický náměstek). Following are general departments such as the accounting and customer service departments. There are also elements unique for the orchestra such as the concert department (which organizes concerts at the home stage and performances abroad), or the music archives (which provides music services for continuous musical operation).

The unique and exceptional feature of the principal conductor is his/her continuous working with the orchestra. He/she takes responsibility for the concert season, is the person who studies most of the

meetings and discusses artistic themes (previous concerts, dramaturgy, etc.). There are different approaches within the structure of the art advisory board. Traditionally, the board is composed of leaders of the instrumental groups, concert master, orchestral supervisor, and conductor. However, there is a tendency to start innovative approaches for the board, such as voting (e.g. Orchestra of Moravian Theatre Olomouc). The main role in such a case is given to the popularity and personality of the player. In other cases, the board can also have external members (Carlsbad Symphony Orchestra). The idea is to improve the communication with public representatives and persons from the whole political spectrum.

The administrative section is usually occupied by a quite small number of employees. The team usually consists of five to ten people (larger teams can be seen only with the Czech Philharmonic). At the same time, an accumulation of positions and functions is observed. The major risk connected with an accumulation of positions is the work overload. The responsible staff is often not able to embrace all the

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activities of the administrative and musical department in the same time. Especially hard is setting up two lists of priorities and merging these priorities for a particular position. This leads to overall fatigue and loss of motivation, with the result that the staff members only “extinguish” a burning issue and do not solve tasks in detail. Also only a short time is devoted to innovative ideas; there is no opportunity for innovation and presenting ideas to the organizational management and the public. A heavy danger is the burnout of employees, which can occur due to the large workload and a lack of feedback.

Orchestras, as subjects to this analysis, experienced many different problems and were analyzed separately. The case studies will not be published in full, due to the restrictions set down as ethical and personal requirements of the research. Each organization received individual analysis and subsequent guidelines. The organizations cannot be in detail publicly compared one-to-one with the other organizations. Privacy restrictions are strictly followed. Czech orchestras feature many different structures (often inflexible). Orchestras have different priorities, even when they are comparable in size. In order to give accurate and “private” assistance, information about orchestras was compared with recommendations for similar organizations in business and the non-profit sector. The comparisons among the orchestras resulted in the main body of conclusions for this paper, but their discussion is not carried out in a way which would be focused on the disclosure of an organization and its problematic areas.

Conclusions

Key identified problems of Czech symphony orchestras

- Communication between musicians and the

administration. Issues are often caused by the strong position of an individual player in the labor unions.

- Personality of the orchestral leaders. In organizations led by one of the musicians his/her self-confidence is often inadequate. Main problems consist in a lack of economic education and inadequate management skills.
- Insufficient financing. Its origin resides in the inadequate communication and often suboptimal relations with the responsible municipality or other state administrative bodies. Culture is not understood as a priority by state representatives.
- Insufficient exchange of “good practices” and “know how.” Many experts suggest that inspiration and constant benchmarking is a way to keep an organization on the top.

Recurrent problems are turning around in a vicious circle. It is very hard to identify the correct place to start with improvements.

Findings and answers in the wider context of the research aims and questions

The beginning of the paper briefly described the historical development of orchestral ensembles in the Czech region. Later the text named key current factors influencing the situation and position of Czech orchestral ensembles. The financial subsidies provided by municipalities, regions and/or the Ministry of Culture create a tension especially in the area of the human resources, which use the biggest part of the provided subsidies. On the other hand, the employees are financed in a fixed way – there are given categories of wages (varied based on educational level and years in the ensemble), which are mostly lower than the average wage in the Czech

Republic. That means the gap in the context of the "cost disease" does not rise too rapidly.

Czech symphony orchestras are mostly not specialized – their purpose is to give concerts of classical music with repertoire based especially in the romantic style, classicism and the first half of the 20th century. There are only a few orchestral ensembles – mainly private, which are specialized in the interpretation of the baroque music (Collegium 1704, Musica Florea or Collegium Marianum) or new and experimental music (The Berg Orchestra, Brno Contemporary Orchestra).

Professional symphony orchestras that fulfill the criteria for "professionalism" (number of artistic employees, types of contracts, etc.) are not fully self-sufficient. The self-sufficiency level is around 20-30 % (regional orchestras) and up to 50% (in Prague). Czech Philharmonic creates a new fresh and creative direction and can be named as an example of good practice in the Czech region (new marketing and branding).

Suggestions for improvement

Orchestras have to set up systematic long-term education and training for the staff. Good administrative practices are a common topic in today's world. National orchestras may help to organize lectures and seminars for students and also for current executives. International cooperation with similar organizations and academic institutions may be beneficial as well. Continuous education is essential, especially when there are so many technical innovations and new practices available. It is essential to set individual definitions of the player/employee ratio (regular employees versus players hired only for a single concert). This would give musicians and also conductors more freedom to participate in various cultural projects. This was often seen as a disadvantage by musicians who have to work harder to ensure a good income.

With more funds coming through grant applications, there is a growing importance to the administrative part of the project structure (hiring more administrative support for set projects and financing these people by cultural projects).

The role of partnerships and international connections also seems to be of importance. Students could follow "in the shadow" of the leading ensemble members who could greatly help them in their development and in the more efficient use of their capabilities. Orchestras may be more involved in partnerships with academies (universities). Internships (work/study) for students is popular among Czech and foreign universities (especially ERASMUS Mundus program). Sadly systematic volunteering is developing at a slow rate in the Czech Republic, but orchestras have to attract volunteers and/or create firm base of such people.

New approaches to the structures of the art advisory board are needed (with some of them mentioned above). Interchange between

musicians and systematic preparation for concerts has to be increased. Also the concert plan and dramaturgy has to attract a young audience and various age groups.

Careful management and strategic planning have to be considered as must-dos, as public funds will not be sufficient forever and orchestras have to step fully into the current economic situation in creative ways.

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